1:Gallin E-4,5 (1957-1958) 1966
AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5

future and long-term considerations, in Hsin Hsing the needs of the present are by no means overlooked. When a family enters into marriage or adoption proceedings, the parents make the arrangements with great care, because taking another person into the family may mean extra hands for the work of the household or merely an extra mouth to feed. The new person can facilitate the building and continuation of a stronger and larger family or hasten the family's division or destruction. One other important factor to be considered is that through the extension of relationships with *ch'in ch'i* (matrilateral and affinal relatives) beyond the village by either marriage or adoption, the family can enhance its socioeconomic security and political position. For these reasons, marriage and adoption are contractual matters in Taiwan, determined by whole families rather than individuals.

MARRIAGE

While surname and *tsu* exogamy is universal in the Hsin Hsing area as well as in traditional southeast China, marriage within one's own village is not uncommon, but is clearly preferred outside the village. It is considered incestuous for any person to marry another who bears the same surname. Whether the other is actually a member of one's own *tsu* (a *ch'in tsu*) or a perfect stranger, possibly even from another part of Taiwan, the rule still holds. One may still read stories in the newspapers of the suicide in the city of two lovers whose families forbade their marriage because they bore the same surname. In the village even a mention of such a marriage is frowned on.

Except for this prohibition, however, there are no rules against marriage within one's own village. Of course, in a single *tsu* village the individual has no choice but marriage outside the village. However, in villages like Hsin Hsing with a number of surnames, marriage between villagers is not unsusual. In 1958 there were about twelve cases in which the families of both husband and wife were Hsin Hsing villagers.

There are a number of reasons why, even in a multi-*tsu* type of village such as Hsin Hsing, the villagers prefer marriage with someone from elsewhere. One is that the small population of the village and the presence there of only twelve surname groups limits the individual's choice of a mate. Another less practical reason lies in the general village attitude that "It is better to marry outside of the village since marriages between two families of the same village are just not as interesting." When the bride lives in another village some distance away, the marriage procession with its musical accompaniment from the groom's village to the girl's village and back again carrying the

3:Wolf F-5 (1959-1961) 1968 AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5
Peihotien

talents are up to her mother's ambitions is hard to say, but with this possibility in mind, A-hong was not likely to smile upon a promise of marriage, even from the son of a wealthy industrialist.

I never found out how Tan A-hong discovered the young people's plans, but it was probably through an intercepted letter. After telling the Lim family about her daughter's deceit, A-hong set out for Taipei to confront Chun-ieng in the wine house where she worked. Lim A-pou, fearing a serious outcome, accompanied her. When mother and daughter met, there was a violent scene. Chun-ieng tried to explain that she had been putting gold away for her mother's support and that she and her lover planned to send her a generous allowance, but A-hong was too angry, and perhaps too frightened, to pay any attention. She slapped Chun-ieng repeatedly, accused her of vile deeds, and told her to "go die." Chun-ieng ran out of the room, promising her mother that she would kill herself at once. Lim A-pou, who must have seemed wildly incongruous in this setting, sent A-hong away and searched the building for Chun-ieng. The girl was not to be found, so A-pou rushed back to the village to consult with Lim Chieng-cua. A young woman's threat of suicide is not taken lightly on Taiwan—their alternatives are too few. As soon as he heard A-pou's description of the encounter, Lim Chieng-cua hurried to Tapu where he phoned relatives and friends in Taipei to organize a search.

Thus began a long tense afternoon of waiting. Tan A-hong sat in A-pou's bedroom, her mood varying between remorse and fury at the "thankless girl." In the midst of this anxious suspense, Li Guat-ngo, Lim A-pou's adopted daughter and Chun-ieng's childhood playmate, arrived to pay a visit to her family and in particular to Chun-ieng. Li Guat-ngo is now the wife of a moderately prosperous shopkeeper; she has two children, good humor, and a tendency to speak her mind.

She listened with concern to her foster mother's account of the morning's events, casting looks of utter disgust at Tan A-hong. When A-hong began a tirade of complaints against Chun-ieng, Guat-ngo refused to listen. "Do you want her to die? What if she does kill herself? What will you do then? She has been very good to you. You must have a very bad heart to talk this way."

Angered, Tan A-hong answered, "I have a bad heart? You wait until your children get older and treat you like she treats me. Then you'll know what I'm talking about."

Guat-ngo: "If my daughter is like her, I will consider myself very

3:Wolf F-5 (1959-1961) 1968 AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5
Peihotien

not an adopted daughter, she wouldn't be that way. She doesn't know whether you really need money or not. You have lost every dollar you got from selling your house now. Sure, that was your own money to do with as you wished, but you think about that, too. She is getting older and she is going to take care of you after she's married, but she won't be able to give you so much money to gamble with. Married or not, she won't be able to make this much money in a few more years. If you had another NT$10,000 to gamble with, you wouldn't be in this mood today."

As he left the room, Lim Chieng-cua added: "It is a rule that a child *must* be good to his parents, but parents have to treat their children decently, too. That is also a rule. You can do many things to your children, but there is a point beyond which you cannot go. You have already gone too far. You must stop pushing her. If she is dead, your next daughter is too young to be of any use to you. What will you do?"

Tan A-hong, crying quietly, went home.

Late that evening, Lim Chieng-cua was summoned to Tapu to receive a telephone call. One of the children was sent to tell A-hong. She was a pitiful sight as she walked into the house. Her anger was gone and her terror reduced her to listing absurd reasons as to why Chun-ieng would not kill herself. When Lim Chieng-cua returned, he told the assembled group that Chun-ieng had been found and was in good health. He didn't even look at Tan A-hong and retired at once to his bedroom.

Chun-ieng returned to Peihotien late the next day, and I'm afraid the villagers were rather disappointed by her appearance. She should have looked wan and dejected, but instead she looked happier than I have ever seen her. She amiably satisfied the curiosity of her neighbors, saving the details of her adventure for the family. Her skill in story-telling did not suffer even when the story was at her own expense. After running out of the wine house, she bought some poison and went to a hotel. She gave us a humorous description of the delighted, if bewildered, pedi-cab driver to whom she gave the last of her money. Just as she was about to take the pills, she heard someone in the hotel being called to the telephone and decided she should phone her lover in Tainan so that he wouldn't think she had killed herself because of something he had done. The connection was, of course, bad, so the boyfriend made her promise to wait until he could

3:Wolf F-5 (1959-1961) 1968 AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5
Peihotien

get to Taipei to talk with her. She then spent an entertaining hour trying to locate some relatives who would come and pay her hotel bill.

The source of Chun-ieng's unexpected happiness was revealed more slowly. Tan A-hong's complaints about her daughter were not completely groundless. Chun-ieng often answered her angry words with scorn and disrespect. She did not trust her mother and sometimes treated her honest need for money with disdain—understandable perhaps, but not behavior expected of a dutiful daughter. Unfortunately, Chun-ieng *was* a dutiful daughter. The anguish which prompted her toward suicide was as much the result of her own self-blame as of her mother's imprecations. Lim A-pou told me many months later that this was not the first time Chun-ieng had contemplated leaving her mother (always with adequate financial provision), but each time she had felt sorry for the older woman and returned. The interview that took place with her lover when he arrived from Tainan seemed to provide another solution. He generously proposed that she give up her plan of joining him, but also give up her work in the winehouse. He would send her a weekly allowance (the sum of which caused many round eyes) and visit her as often as possible until the day when they could be married. After their marriage, they would decide what to do about her mother. This was indeed a fairy-tale ending if it had been in fact the ending.

We had the pleasure of Chun-ieng's presence around the village for several months. Her boyfriend visited fairly regularly and she occasionally went to see him. Needless to say, each of her trips was preceded by anxious ill-temper on the part of Tan A-hong, but Chun-ieng always returned at the appointed time. Their quarrels were either less frequent or less violent because they came to my attention only rarely during those months. After awhile, though, I began to see more of Chun-ieng in the Lim house, often in tears, and I heard more of Tan A-hong's gambling debts. It wasn't long before Chun-ieng started disappearing from the village for two or three days at a time. I asked the family about her absences and received noncommittal answers until finally Lim A-pou admitted that she had returned to work. When I asked what would happen if her boyfriend unexpectedly turned up, Lim A-pou told me sadly, "We are supposed to tell him she has gone to work as a hostess in a coffee shop and we don't know where it is." Whether her lover discovered her deception or whether Chun-ieng